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ROAD TRIP DETAILS ON PAGE 7

TLC LANDSCAPING DESIGN + POOLS

V-Ball returns strong

Submitted by Forest City Volleyball Club

The Forest City Volleyball Club would like to thank their outstanding coaches, athletes, parents, volunteers and community for the safe, fun, and successful season back on the courts playing the great game of volleyball!

We were so pleased to see FCVC athletes grow in skill and sportsmanship throughout the season – while building relationships and creating memories to last a lifetime.

A special shout out to FCVC Head Coach Dave Phoenix and the 17U Hyperion team on their performance at the Ontario Championships. Ranked 9th coming into the tournament, the boys put it together and captured the Tier 1, Div 1 Silver Medal!

We would also like to recognize FCVC head coach Sergio Chuy and the 13U Evergreen team on their 6v6 Div 1 Tier 1 silver medals at OVA Provincial Championships. This team demonstrated exceptional team culture on and off the court and are definitely a team to watch for years to come!

If your athlete is interested in learning the game or honing their skills this summer, check out the terrific programs available – learn from the best! Visit www.forestcityvolleyball.com today!

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May/June 2022
London & Area Edition

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Special thanks to Western Mustangs for their cover photos.

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New season, new team, same goal

Contributions by London Majors
Photos by Matt Hiscox Photography

A new baseball season is upon us, and the London Majors are hoping to provide plenty of excitement on the diamond in 2022. They certainly did that last summer (and into the fall), winning their first Intercounty Baseball League championship in 46 years. But it's a new season, and it's back to square one. There are several returning players from last year's championship squad, but there are even more new faces – players from near and far.

"We've got a good core group of returning players ... guys who had a big impact last year ... and we've got some new young talent that I'm really excited about," said Roop Chanderdat, Majors co-owner, GM and field manager. "It's great to be back playing baseball – especially on Friday nights in front of our home fans at Labatt Park."

Among the returnees are Owen Boon and Pedro De Los Santos, the co-aces of the pitching staff last season. Securing their return was a coup for Chanderdat, and it gives London two top arms. Boon led the IBL in wins and strikeouts last season, while De Los Santos was tops in ERA. Another impactful arm from 2021 who is back is reliever Braeden Ferrington, who posted career bests in ERA, innings pitched and saves last season.

And new pitchers? There are plenty – headlined by a talented import arm, Jose Arias. A native of the Dominican Republic, Arias spent time in the affiliated minor leagues from 2010-2015 with the Chicago Cubs and Miami Marlins organizations. Fernando Fernandez is another new arm. A Quebec native, he has pro experience in the Can-Am League and previously pitched for the Guelph Royals in the IBL.

Other new arms include Bo Lewington, a Calgary native, Daniel Gore, a recent Madonna University graduate, and Jordan Spring, a local recruit.

Headlining position player recruits is Taylor Wright, who Wright started all 58 games as a senior for the Maryland Terrapins in 2019, batting .290 with 20 doubles (4th most in a single season in Maryland baseball history). Chanderdat also expects import catcher Robert Mullen, from Panama, to have a big impact. So, too, for Starling Joseph, a native of the Dominican Republic who spent five seasons in the Texas Rangers organization (2015-2020).

Also new to the club is Drew Lawrence, Kieran Bowles, Daniel Perrier, Evan Symons and Phil Whelan, each of whom has versatility to play different positions around the diamond. They'll be joining key returnees Chris McQueen and Keith Kandel, the Majors' starting middle infield, as well as outfielder Austin Wilkie and DH Cleveland Brownlee, who returns for a 12th season in the Majors pinstripes.

www.londonmajors.com

Among the key returnees for the London Majors in 2022: Their co-aces from 2021, Owen Boon (left) and Pedro De Los Santos.

SportsXpress Network

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Baseball history in our own backyard

Submitted by Tourism London

Did you know that London's Labatt Memorial Park is the world's oldest baseball grounds? It's true. With roots as far back as 1877, the baseball stadium was originally home to the London Tecumsehs. The park hosted bigtime games during the 'golden age' of baseball, and celebrated diversity within the game long before the colour barrier was broken in Major League Baseball.

Want to learn more? You can learn it all by participating in a Labatt Park Tour, which is back for a second year, courtesy of Tourism London.

"Many people aren't aware of the incredible history of Labatt Memorial Park, and we look forward to sharing these stories with Londoners and many others this summer," said Zanth Jarvis, the London's Director of Sport Tourism. "We believe this has the opportunity to become another key attraction for the city by providing a unique, memorable and educational experience."

Learn about the London Majors, London Tigers, and all the other teams that have called Labatt Park home over the years. There is something interesting for everyone to learn – not just fans of baseball. Guests will learn all about the role that the park has played – not only in the City of London, but in the game of baseball as a whole.

And don't forget to bring a ball and glove to play catch on the same field that baseball legends have played on, including Ty Cobb, Satchell Paige, Fergie Jenkins, Deion Sanders and Jeff Bagwell.

The tour concludes inside the original 1937 Roy MacKay Clubhouse, where guests will see artifacts and displays from the mid 20th century. The tours were originally formed through a partnership with the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum and the Beachville District Museum to promote Southwestern Ontario as a destination for baseball heritage.

"Labatt Memorial Park is a gem in our city, and we're thrilled to be able to offer tours to showcase its incredible history," said Jon-Paul McGonigle, Division Manager, Culture, Special Events and Sport Services.

Are you ready to visit beautiful Labatt Memorial Park and learn more about its rich history? For more information, including booking tours and more, visit:

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Tour participants learn about the earliest days of baseball – and other events – at Labatt Park, right up to the present day, where the London Majors call the historic ballpark home (and where other ballclubs play throughout the summer).

The joy of baseball – at any age

Submitted by London Mens Baseball League

Dear Diary,

It is Monday, following the first LMBL game of the season. I am sore. A good sore, but still very sore. Yesterday was the first time I've used certain muscles since September 12, 2021. But despite feeling like Frankenstein this morning, boy did I miss playing baseball.

Playing catch, or even hitting in the cage before the season. Nothing compares to playing a real baseball game at one of our great parks here in London – especially when we get to play at historic Labatt Park.

I haven't run that hard, thrown that much or wailed at a pitch like I did yesterday in a long while.

Celebrating a hit or making sure not to get to down on the swing and misses. It was just great to be back on the field.

On top of that, getting together with teammates before the game in the dugout or at the tailgate after, it was great to catch up with some guys who I have not seen since last season.

I never thought I'd get a chance to play real baseball (not just slo-pitch) after age 19, so I'm very happy there is a league like the LMBL.

Some guys even bring their kids and wives to the games, where we get the chance to teach them the 'how tos' or, more often, 'how not to do' certain things on the field.

Even though every step was a challenge this morning, I can't wait for next Sunday already. I'll just be sure to get there a little earlier to stretch...

www.lmblbaseball.ca

The LMBL is an over-30 baseball league that combined healthy competition and a lot for players who love the game and get to continue playing it – including on fields like beautiful Labatt Park.

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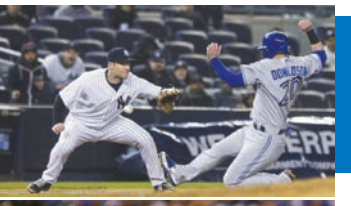

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Let's Play Ball!

EBBA Eager Beaver Baseball Association

By Katie Parkins for Eager Beaver Baseball Association

The time has come to lace those cleats and break in the ball gloves. After a couple years of strange baseball, the time has come to step on the field. With kids ranging in age from four and up, EBBA is ready to play ball! Seeing the kids at clinics and evaluations, these players are excited to swing those bats, and they're full of energy.

There was plenty to be done behind the scenes leading up to Opening Day, and there is still lots to be done throughout the season and still lots of opportunities for volunteer roles. EBBA is fully run by volunteers. Without the volunteer work, there would not be a league. As well as Opening Day, we are also eagerly looking forward to the return of our annual Colman Day, where all-stars are chosen by their peers to participate in a day of all-star games at London's historic Labatt Park. You can find all the information for that fun-filled day on the Eager Beaver website.

If you ever want to get out of the house and you're craving a hotdog and some good little league baseball, come on down to Mornington Park. Grab a snack and cheer on the players!

www.ebba.ca

EBBA players are thrilled to get back to 'normal' baseball in 2022!

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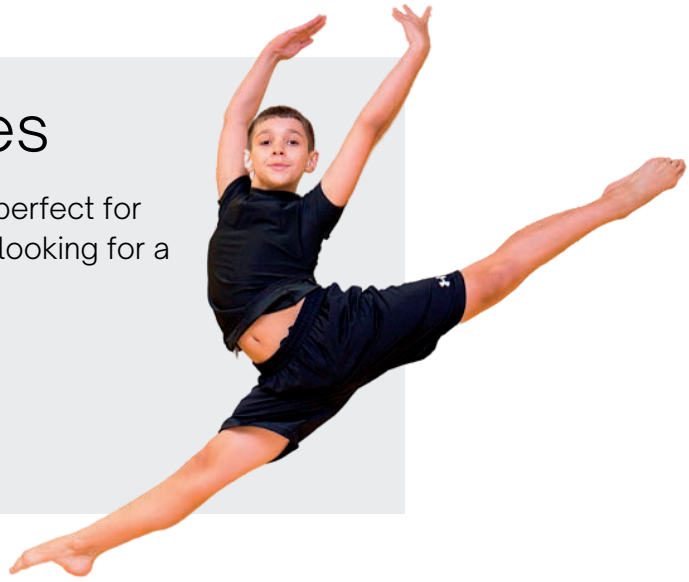

Dance eXtreme

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Miss London cheering for change

Contributions by Paisley Chantler

It was her first pageant, and she came away a winner.

Paisley Chantler, a local cheerleader with the CheerStrike Royals in London, recently traveled to Toronto for the Miss Teenage Ontario pageant, and you can now call her Miss Teenage London Ontario 2022. She not only earned that title, but will also move on to represent the city at the Miss Teenage Canada pageant in August.

Why did she do it?

"Pageants are a great way for girls like me to get out there and meet new people and try new things," said Chantler. "After experiencing a severe concussion – and then the world pandemic – I decided to try something new. The sound of building lifelong friendships and gaining more confidence in myself interested me."

She also did it to stand up for a cause – something she feels strongly about. Each pageant participant chose a 'platform' to support, and Chantler's was addressing bullying and exclusion.

"I have chosen to take a stand," she said, noting that she's experienced and has been impacted by bullying – including physical and verbal assault and harassment – in both elementary and secondary school. "I want to visit schools and sports clubs in order to get my message across. I will be working with an organization to promote my platform through fundraising and media."

And by being crowned Miss Teenage London Ontario 2022, Chantler now has a platform to bring attention to that 'platform,' which is important to her. Her goal is to help create change within the community and on social media.

"We need to make positivity present in our world today," Chantler said, adding that she's also looking to get involved with local businesses. "I am a true believer in working together. I believe this is a chance to share my story and stand up for what is right. As Miss Teenage London Ontario 2022, I believe it is important to take this opportunity and make change."

Paisley Chantler, a cheerleader with London's CheerStrike Royals, was recently crowned Miss London Ontario at a teenage pageant, where her platform was addressing bullying and exclusion.

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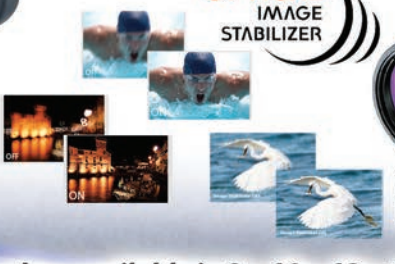

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New, exciting season for Academy footballers

Submitted by London TFC Academy

www.fclondonacademy.ca

The OPDL season has started, with Academy players competing against top talent in the province.

The London TFC Academy was honoured to GO GREEN to help bring awareness to the Lymphoma & Leukemia Society of Canada. Academy players got to meet some awesome Patient Ambassadors, who led FC London's pre-game pep talk, participated in the coin toss, and joined the players in the opening ceremonies.

Congratulations to London TFC's Naomi Langille & Dawson Berrisford for both being selected for the 2022 Provincial Xcel Team

Young TFC Academy fans cheer on FC London's women's team in their home opener.

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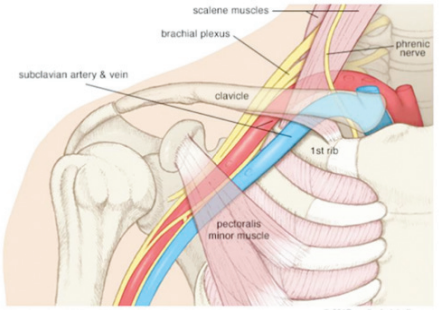
Repetitive movement injuries

By Gwen MacLean for Living Balance Clinic

How many of us are dealing with numbness and tingling in our hands? I know it's a lot because I see many clients with these exact complaints. Repetitive use, whether it's computer use, or other repetitive motions, will set you up for these issues if you are not using your body effectively.

The reason why we have the numbness and tingling is because of compression of the nerves that supply our arms and hands. This group of nerves is called the brachial plexus. **See the photo** and notice how this nerve bundle runs under the scalene muscle in the neck, collar bone and the pectoralis minor muscle. All of these muscles can become very tight when we sit poorly with our head forward and shoulders rounded for many hours at a time and or work repetitive tasks with little body awareness.



Decreasing tension in tissues around the brachial plexus nerves is important. Read to learn more...

Without even realizing it, we use way too much energy when typing an email, chopping vegetables, scrubbing the dishes or most any other task. Here's an exercise to try...

Bring out your vacuum and get ready to do a bit of cleaning. Grasp the handle as you normally would and work for a bit and see if you can sense the tension in your arms and neck and anywhere else in your body as you work. Now rest a minute and then change your grasp on the handle by thinking about how the handle feels on your palm and fingers and then think about the handle being glued to your palm.

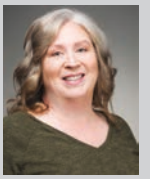
You may feel your grip has changed; it is softer and maybe there is less tension in your body overall. When you feel what you are touching, your grip loosens and therefore your arms, shoulders and neck have less tension and do not work as hard. Try this with the steering wheel of the car or the chef's knife when chopping vegetables.

Now let's try another exercise. This one helps to activate the area under the shoulder blade and around the spine, taking some of the work away from the neck and collarbone area...

Grasp the steering wheel at 10 and 2 o'clock how you normally would. Most people will grasp with the thumb and first two fingers. Grip a little tighter and pay attention to where you feel this in your body. You should feel activity in your neck and collarbones. Now, grasp with emphasis on your last two fingers. You should feel activity under your shoulder blades. Go back and forth between the thumb and first two fingers and then grasp with the last two fingers emphasized.

The tighter grip is for the purpose of this exercise only. Now go back to the softer feel of the previous exercise where you are feeling the wheel with your palm and your grip softens and then go back and forth between the two grips. Do you see where you do not have to grip tightly to get the work done? Do you see why using the two last fingers allows the front of the shoulder to soften? You can try this with anything else you do to decrease tension in tissues around the brachial plexus nerves.

www.livingbalanceclinic.ca



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Golden season!

Submitted by London Ramblers

During a stormy – and somewhat unsettled – basketball season riddled with restrictions, venue and schedule changes, spectator-less games, masking and lockdowns, the U10 Girls Ramblers basketball team persevered and came out from behind the storm clouds shining gold at the culmination of their season at the Ontario Basketball Association (OBA) Provincial Championships!

The team finished their exhibition and OBA league play season with an incredible 23-2 record and were triumphant at the provincial finals at the majestic Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre facility. This special group of 12 players, from across the city of London, came together as first-time teammates and sparked the beginning of what is sure to be lifelong basketball friendships.

"The remarkable success of this Ramblers squad is a direct result of the hard work and dedication of every single one of the 12 players on our team," agreed coaches Rebecca Woods and Karalyn Church. "During practices, teammates consistently held themselves and each other to excellence, perpetually challenging each other with intensity throughout drills and scrimmages. Their competitive drive was evident at every turn.

"Consequently, our team's defense was second to none in the province – our competition struggled to advance the ball through our tenacious palisade of players. Leadership both on and off the court set the elevated calibre from day one, carrying the team to gold in the provincial championship. It is an honour to know and work with this young talent."

Needless to say, the mix of excellence in passionate coaching and player effort were a perfect match for a near perfect season.

In addition to great female coaching, hard work, tenacity and leadership from the players on and off the courts, the team also elevated their season through additional experiences that helped solidify the team's dedication to each other and to their community, as was evident through a gold medal win at the Kitchener Impact Tournament, a community connection with the Western women's basketball team, and a showcase event at the pregame Harlem Globetrotters Show at Budweiser Gardens. This elevated their season from unbelievable to an absolutely unforgettable one.

Nobody knows for sure where next year will take these keen and talented young female players, but this golden season will surely be hard to beat!

www.londonramblers.com

The U10 London Ramblers girls basketball team enjoyed a phenomenal season in 2021-22, winning tournaments, building friendships, learning life lessons, and winning it all – the OBA provincial title!

Playoff time!

Submitted by the London Lightning and photo by Bruce Laing

The 2022 season has been a good one for the London Lightning, as the team clinched the number one overall seed heading into the playoffs. With just three regular season games in May, the Lightning turned their focus on their best-of-five semi-final series against the Windsor Express, beginning in mid-May. If successful, they'll then play for a fifth league championship as May closes – and perhaps into early June.

London is wrapping up its historic 10th season, the longest of any professional basketball team in Canada outside of the Toronto Raptors. The 2022 National Basketball League of Canada schedule featured a partnership of cross-border games with US-based teams from The Basketball League. The Lightning completed their six games against TBL teams and posted an NBL Canada best 5-1 record.

The London Lightning finished first in the NBLC standings during the regular season, giving them home-court advantage for the two-round league playoffs beginning mid-May.

The Lightning opened their season with a league record tying 11 straight wins, but the team had its fair share of ups and downs during the 2022 season. London suffered its first loss on the road in Albany against the Patroons. While being a perfect 11-0 at home (with one game remaining at the time of this writing), London has had its share of struggles on the road, holding just a 7-4 record (with one road game left). Despite some struggles down the stretch, largely the result of a shorthanded roster due to injuries, the Bolts were able to clinch themselves the number one overall seed.

Clinching that number one overall seed means the Lightning guaranteed themselves home-court advantage throughout the two-round playoffs, which begin May 15 (just three days after the Lightning's final game). At publication time, the Lightning had yet to announce the official dates for their two home games in the first round, so stay tuned to the Lightning website and social media for the official playoff schedule.

And make sure to get your tickets! You can do so in-person at the Budweiser Gardens box office or online at www.budweisergardens.com.

www.lightningbasketball.ca

Joining forces for fitness

Submitted by YMCA of Southwestern Ontario

Group Fitness at the Bostwick YMCA of Southwestern Ontario is for everybody! We have a wide range of classes – with more to come – as we progress further into our reopening. Group Fitness classes are led by certified instructors, and are designed to help you feel better, stronger and healthier – both in the gym and in your everyday life. Instructors will lead you through a fun, safe and effective workout and will show options and modifications so you can work at a level that suits your abilities, needs, and goals.

One of our newer programs is Strength and Stretch, a 35-minute interval workout using dumbbells followed by a 10-minute stretch. The class is designed for all levels – and options using a chair are even shown for those with mobility issues. Bootcamp is another great class designed for those looking to increase cardio and strength. Instructors will use dumbbells and other fitness accessories to provide an energizing and athletic workout that can be participated in at both low and high intensity levels.

If you are looking to relax and recharge while also building strength, balance and flexibility, our Yoga classes are calming and peaceful 1-hour sessions that anyone can participate in. These are just three of our offerings, and we have many more classes designed to meet different interests and abilities.

At the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario, we pride ourselves on our family engagement. In our Group Fitness classes, we welcome participants as young as 10 years old (10-12 years require parent or guardian supervision) and 13+ are able to participate in all of our adult fitness offerings. Our goal is to create an inclusive and engaging community, whereby we all work together to improve our wellness, health and happiness as a community.

www.ymcaswo.ca

A variety of different group fitness classes are offered at the Bostwick YMCA, which prides itself on creating an inclusive and engaging community – with health and wellness the goal!

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Coaches, players eager to hit the field

Submitted by London Minor Football Association

As we have since 1958, the London Minor Football Association will take the field this fall with 24 teams competing across three age divisions. This is the perfect place to start playing the game and prepare for high school football.

Our focus is on sportsmanship, teamwork and staying active. Our mission is to prepare players for high school football and make football fans for life.

All our coaches in the LMFA volunteer for the love of the game. That includes Brandon Stiles, coach of the U10 Red Storm, who says the best thing about coaching that age group is the players' willingness to learn and their pure joy playing the game of football.

"After missing out for two years, coming back last year and seeing how much these kids enjoyed themselves makes it all worth it," Stiles says. "I have been lucky, and the coaches I have coached with have become lifelong friends and I will forever be grateful for that."

It's not just the kids who've learned during Stiles' time as an LMFA coach. He's gained skills and learned a lot along the way – including that you need patience coaching youngsters.

"As much as you think things are going to happen a certain way, you have to remember these kids are 10 years old and have a mind of their own," Stiles says. "You just have to go with the flow."

If you are looking to join a coaching staff this fall, please complete the application form on our website.

Our games are played on Sundays on the turf fields at Citywide Park in London as well as 1Password Park in St. Thomas. The season runs from mid-August to the end of October.

Please visit www.lmfafootball.ca or call 519-852-4465 for more information on the 2022 season and our summer camps and flag football programs.

www.lmfafootball.ca

Red Storm U10 coaches

Coach Brandon Stiles

2021 U10 Red Storm

2021 U12 Hawks

Celebrating sports excellence

Submitted by the Western Mustangs

The Mustangs Awards gala returned to an in-person format at Alumni Hall in April for the 81st annual celebration of Western's teams and athletes.

And the big winners? They included Deionte Knight (Football) and Kate Current (Cross Country and Track & Field), who were the recipients of the male and female athletes of the year, respectively.

Knight was a force for the Mustangs last fall, as he helped lead the defensive effort that concluded with a Vanier Cup Championship for Western. Knight was both the OUA and U SPORTS winner as Most Outstanding Lineman of the Year. He led the country with 7.5 sacks on the season and struck fear into the Mustangs opposition all season.

Current, the captain of both her teams, had an incredible season – especially on the Track & Field side of things. She ran right through the competition, winning gold and silver medals in the 3000m and 1500m races, respectively, at the OUA Championship, and then followed that up with a double gold performance in those same races at the U SPORTS Championships. During the cross country season last fall, Current battled through a lower-body injury but rehabbed enough to join the team that finished 2nd at the OUA Championship and U SPORTS Championships.

Two other major awards at the annual gala were the F.W.P. Jones Trophy and the Dr. Claude Brown Trophy. Joan-Shiao Chen (Swimming) was named the 66th winner of the former honour. She is all-time top 10 in five events in the pool, and she led the Mustangs in 2021-22 to a podium finish at the OUA Championships. Chen is also an integral part of the Mustangs Athletes Student Council, serving in all five of her years at Western – including as president this past year. She's also involved with SAMHI (Student Athlete Mental Health Initiative) and was part of SAMP (Student Athlete Mentorship Program) from 2018-2020. And in the classroom? She was a U SPORTS Academic All Canadian from 2019 to 2022.

The 84th winner of the Dr. Claude Brown Trophy was Jackson Bere (Volleyball). Bere has been a leader since the moment he joined the Mustangs in 2018. That season, he was recognized as one of the top rookies in Canada. He's since achieved OUA First Team All-Star status every year he has played. This season, Bere was 3rd in solo blocks in the OUA. He's currently a member of Canada's National B team, and he played in the Norceca Championships and earned a 2nd-place finish.

Besides Chen and Bere, 10 other Mustang athletes received Purple blanket – an honour given to athletes, usually in their graduating year, who have excelled both athletically and academically. This year's recipients included Isaiah Frielink (Cross Country, Track & Field), Megan Parno (Softball), Daniel Valente Jr. (Football), Matthew Oliver (Tennis), Lauren O'Donnell (Soccer), Evelyn Zheng (Fencing), Jared Hendrick-Polack (Track & Field), Nicola Cheng (Fencing), Omar Shiddo (Basketball), and Brett Ellerman (Football).

Congratulations to all Mustangs Award winners!

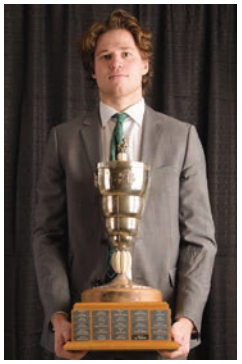
Vanier champs receive rings

This year's awards season also featured a ring ceremony for the men's football team, winners of the Vanier Cup last fall. That triumph and those memories? They'll never be forgotten, and the players' championship rings are certainly symbolic of the achievement.

Head coach Greg Marshall called up each player individually and had alumni from past Vanier Cup Championship teams present this year's winners with the ring boxes. Each player was asked not to open their boxes right away, though, as Marshall wanted everyone to open them together.

"I actually had to box 140 rings by myself because I didn't want anyone to see them," Marshall said. "The design and final product was a secretive project, and I couldn't be more ecstatic with how they turned out. It's a real tribute to these guys, and it's really a reflection that will bond these guys forever."

The ring has several important features, including all of Western's Vanier Cup championship years around the top crown of the ring, along with eight purple stones representing those championships. On top, it features a football-shaped purple design emblazoned with the Mustangs logo. On one side of the ring is the player/coach/staff member's name and their jersey number or position with notable buildings on Western campus in the background along with the university crest, on the opposite side are the trophies that the Mustangs won in 2021 (Yates Cup, Mitchell Bowl & Vanier Cup).



Jackson Bere (Volleyball): Winner of Dr. Claude Brown Trophy

Joan-Shiao Chen (Swimming): Winner of F.W.P. Jones Trophy

Deionte Knight (Football): Male Athlete of the Year

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The ring presentation was the cherry on top for defensive lineman Deionte Knight, who was invited to a pair of NFL rookie camps earlier in the day.

"This was an amazing night for all of us on this roster from top to bottom," Knight said. "We all battled so hard to get this, and to see this ring was vindication for all the hard work and dedication we put in as a unit. Now we have something that we can keep and that ties this group together for the rest of our lives, which is just so special."

Four selected in CFL Draft

Four members of the Western Mustangs football team were chosen in this year's CFL Draft, including Deionte Knight, Zack Fry, Daniel Valente Jr., and Zach Lindley.

Knight was the first to hear his name called, as he was selected in the 2nd round (10th overall) by the Toronto Argonauts. If he joins Toronto's team, Knight would join Mustangs alumni Dylan Giffen on the CFL club.

Fry was the second Mustang selected (16th overall). The offensive lineman went to the Saskatchewan Roughriders. A London native, Fry has been an impact player on the Mustangs since coming into the OUA, and he'll look to take his talents to the next level in front of one of the most passionate CFL markets in the country.

Valente Jr. went in the 4th round (31st overall). The London native was chosen by the Ottawa Redblacks. Coming off a season where he was named an OUA All-Star and U SPORTS First Team All-Canadian (and Defensive Player of the Game in the Vanier Cup), Valente will now bring his speed, agility, intensity and character to the nation's capital.

"Super pumped to get to go to Ottawa and play in a beautiful city with two Western alums, Jordan Beaulieu and Shaq Johnson. I know I'll feel right at home," said Valente Jr. "It was a long day, for sure. Waiting around was getting anxious, but it was totally worth it. It was a great feeling to finally get the call."

Lindley went in the 8th round (69th overall) when the Montreal Alouettes called his name. Lindley had 39.5 tackles this season for the Mustangs, adding two interceptions and a sack. He was named an OUA Second-Team All-Star.

"I really just tried to stay positive and optimistic throughout the whole process, and I'm unbelievably grateful that I get the opportunity with Montreal," Lindley said. "I think the atmosphere at the Vanier was incredible, and I'm looking forward to playing in front of fans that are passionate about their football."

www.westernmustangs.ca

Western Mustangs football players received their Vanier Cup rings during awards season this spring. The championship ring is a thing of beauty, commemorating the team's title in football's first season back after a canceled COVID season.

Four Western Mustangs were selected in this year's CFL Draft, including (left to right) Deionte Knight (Toronto Argonauts), Zack Fry (Saskatchewan Roughriders), Daniel Valente Jr. (Ottawa Redblacks), and Zach Lindley (Montreal Alouettes).

Summer Games ahead!

Contributions by London Senior Games

It's time for senior athletes to get moving! That means registering to participate with the London Senior Games association in the Forest City. And registration time is now! Who's eligible? Any local resident aged 55 and over looking to get active and have fun playing sports. It's the London Senior Summer Games, and there's a lot to choose from.

Sports and activities include contract bridge, euchre, darts, shuffleboard, five-pin bowling, lawn bowling, tennis, carpet bowling, pickleball, slo-pitch and sand volleyball (this is a demonstration sport).

Sand Volleyball is a new addition to the Senior Summer Games, which are returning after far too long (due to COVID-19)! London residents aged 55 and up have the opportunity to participate in a variety of sports and activities – and even move on to represent the District at the provincial Games.

Individual-specific events include prediction walking, cycling, 8-ball, snooker, and golf.

Participants are usually divided into age categories, including 55 +, 65+, and 75+. Gold, silver, and bronze pens are awarded in each category, and winners also have the option of representing District 30 at the Ontario 55-Plus Summer Games in Peterborough the weekend of Aug. 9-11 (many winners from the 55-Plus Games prior to the pandemic are travelling to Kamloops, B.C. to compete on a national level from Aug. 22 to 26).

An entry fee of $15 is all that's required, which serves as your Ontario Senior Games Association membership (good for both summer and the upcoming winter games).

For a calendar of events and registration forms, visit: **osga55plus.ca**.

www.londonseniorgames.com

Next-level hockey training

Contributions by Snipe Academy

Snipe Academy is excited to offer Project Ice, a game-changing program for young hockey players (U8 to U14) looking to improve their skills and take their games to the next level.

Run by pro coaches, Project Ice features teaching and training to athletes in small groups (no more than 12), thus ensuring everyone gets lots of reps and proper time for correction and feedback. The program provides training in all areas of the game, including skating and shooting, as well as edges and increasing a player's power and confidence on the ice.

With pro coaches, Project Ice maximizes players' opportunities to improve their game. Skill-specific coaches allow for specific improvement in a young hockey player's skillset. And real-game scenarios means that what young players learn will translate directly to competition and their game on the ice.

The program runs four Wednesdays in July and five in August for a total of nine sessions – at Bostwick Arena, a local arena that offers a convenient location for families. Players can sign up for the July sessions, the August sessions, or all nine classes. Going to miss a session while away on vacation? You'll get a shooting class to maximize your skills and maintain your value.

You can sign up on the Snipe app, on the website, or by email or text.

The Goalie Project

Launched at the beginning of COVID, due to the challenges created by the pandemic, The Goalie Project was a hit – and it's growing. Featuring pro coaches, the program leverages Snipe's skill ice with its goalie ice to save parents money and stretch their hockey training dollar.

Each goalie session has two nets going, a maximum of four goalies, a pro goalie coach and two paid shooters helping to give each goalie plenty of reps while challenging them as they improve their skills. The program even includes power skating and goalie battle drills. And as an added bonus, all goalies can skate free at Snipe skill sessions and/or the Academy's drop-in pickup hockey sessions during the winter.

www.snipeacademy.com

Young hockey players – forwards, defensemen and goalies alike – develop their skills throughout the year at Snipe Academy, a premiere hockey facility in London that offers on- and off-ice training.

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Junior hockey a welcome return

Contributions by London Knights

It didn't end the way they wanted, but the London Knights gave it their all in 2021-22 and provided fans with exciting hockey all season long – a welcome reprieve from COVID-19. Londoners were thrilled to have junior hockey back, and the Knights once again won more often than not.

Things ended with a thrilling Game 7 matchup against the Kitchener Rangers. After a hard-fought first-round playoff series, and dominant play from London in the final 20 minutes, it was Kitchener who got the right bounces in overtime to win the series and move on in the OHL playoffs.

There was plenty worth celebrating for the Knights in 2021-22, and it all began with a season-opening nine-game winning streak – in their first action since March of 2020. London held first place in the Midwest Division for nearly the entire season.

The Knights' all-star goalie, Brett Brochu, represented Canada at the World Junior Championships over the holiday break, and although the tournament was cut short due to COVID-19, the London netminder managed to earn a win in round robin play before things shut down.

Isaiah George and Ruslan Gazizov also had the opportunity to represent the club on a different stage. The pair participated in the CHL top prospects game.

It was quite the year, meanwhile, for the Knights' top two scorers, Luke Evangelista and Antonio Stranges. Evangelista tallied 55 goals in the regular season, becoming just the fifth player during the Hunter ownership era to reach the 50-goal milestone.

Stranges showed off his skills on a near-nightly basis. On three separate occasions, he scored goals that went viral on social media. All were similar, and all were highlight reel-worthy, as he skated coast-to-coast, eluding defenders and knocking home nifty goals. The clips blew up on social media, with shares and posts from ESPN and the NHL, among others (Stranges also led London in scoring in their playoff series).

Overall, the Knights finished 39-22-5-2 during the regular season, good for the No. 2 seed in the Western Conference heading into playoffs. Evangelista led the team in scoring with 111 points (fourth most in the league). His 55 goals were tops in the OHL. Brett Brochu finished third in the league with a .911 save percentage. He also made a triumphant return for Game 1 of the playoffs after missing 44 days of action due to an ankle injury that required minor surgery.

Stranges tallied 84 points, including 31 goals, while Sean McGurn had 73 points (20 goals, 53 assists). Cody Morgan, the fourth Knight to average a point per game, finished with 30 goals and 71 points while playing in all 68 regular season contests (the only Knight to do so).

www.londonknights.com

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Calendar of Events

Contact: London@SportsXpress.ca

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May 20
London Majors Home Opener vs. Kitchener Panthers, Labatt Park

May 21-22
GOT GAME Street Hockey &Street Basketball Tournaments, Victoria Park

May 27-June 2
St. Thomas Minor Baseball Tournament, Doug Tarry Sports Complex

May 27
Camluck Classic, Western Fair Raceway

May 27-29
London Pickleball Club Tournament, Fanshawe College

June 2-4
OFSAA AAA Boys' Rugby Championship, Various locations

June 5
Forest City Cycling Challenge, Middlesex County

June 4
Running Against Ruptures, Springbank Gardens

June 11
Fanshawe Dragon Boat Festival, Fanshawe Conservation Area

June 16
SARI Golf Tournament, Riverbend Golf & Country Club

June 16
3ICE, Budweiser Gardens

June 18
Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, St Marys

July 1
Embro Highland Games, Embro

5-Jul
30th Children's Health Foundation Golf Classic, Sunningdale Golf & Country Club

July 9
5K Foam Fest Fun Run, Boler Mountain

July 8-17
6th Annual London Talons Baseball Tournament Week 1 & 2, Stronach Fields

August 12
Reach The Beach, GT's in Port Stanley

August 21
WWE Sunday Stunner, Budweiser Gardens

August 27
Jordan's Run The Runway, London Airport-Diamond Aricraft

September 13-17
Nash Cup-Professional Squash Tournament, London Squash Club

September 18
Optimist Club of Oakridge Acres Charity Golf Tournament, Fire Rock Golf Club

September 18
Terry Fox Run, Springbank Gardens

October 2
Springbank Road Race, Springbank Park

KidSport
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JIM ALLEN MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT
Tournament Info
The Jim Allen Memorial Golf Tournament was established in 2014 as a way to continue the passionate work Jim did with the London Sports Council & KidSport London.
Each year we aim to raise as much money as possible to help get as many kids involved in sport each year.
Our last tournament we raised just over $15,000 which was used to support over 250 youth in the London community with the costs associated with minor sports involvement. All kids deserve an opportunity to get involved!
HELP US PUT KIDS IN SPORT
We provide grants to help cover the costs of registration fees so that all kids aged 18 and under in London can play a season of sport.
Our chapter accepts applications and administers grants of up to $250 per child/year, for kids who live in London, or in one of the other communities we serve.
Contact: Bill Smith
519.438.7203 ext. 370
Bill-lsc@westernfairdistrict.com

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GOLD: MACKENZIE ROBINSON

25-year-old Brock Basketball player Mackenzie Robinson is no stranger to obstacles to athletic success. But her resilience has helped her to overcome a laundry list of obstacles. From losing her mom to supporting her sick grandma, to sustaining career-threatening injuries, Mackenzie has persevered. She says "My journey getting here hasn't been easy, but it was worth it!".

SILVER: DARIUS RASO

9-year-old Vaughan Vikings player Darius Raso has endured significant challenges- namely, being diagnosed with Leukemia at age 5. Throughout his treatment, Darius has turned to baseball as an escape. When writing about how far he's come, Darius says "I have made my family, friends, and doctors proud."

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